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Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

Letter dated 28 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith an aide-memoire from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus concerning innovative approaches proposed by the secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency for international cooperation to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations under agenda items 20 (c), "Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster" and 14, "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

(*Signed*) Sergei S. **Ling**
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Belarus
to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 28 November 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Aide-memoire by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus on the innovative approaches proposed by the secretariat of the International Atomic Energy Agency for the international cooperation to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

The Republic of Belarus attaches utmost importance to the continuation and strengthening of international cooperation for studying, mitigating and minimizing the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

The Government of the Republic of Belarus has always had a uniform and consolidated position on the nature of this catastrophe, is internationally recognized as a major technological disaster in terms of its scope, which created long-term environmental, health, economic and social consequences calling for wide and active international cooperation and coordination of efforts.

We commend a very important role continuously played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the efforts to assist the Republic of Belarus in combating the aftermath of that human tragedy.

We note with appreciation that today, 15 years after the Chernobyl disaster, IAEA continues to pay significant attention to this problem, treating it as an issue of unarguable international relevance. We welcome the Agency's search for innovative approaches towards studying, mitigating and minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster as provided for by the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions on Chernobyl.

It was, therefore, with a great deal of interest that the Republic of Belarus took note of the idea put forward by the Director-General of IAEA at the forty-fifth session of the Agency's General Conference, and afterwards highlighted during the debate on the IAEA 2000 annual report at the fifty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly, regarding the possibility of establishing a common forum on the consequences of Chernobyl.

Indeed, the needs and concerns of the affected people can be addressed in a better coordinated and more effective manner provided there is a unanimous position taken by the international community on the true nature of the Chernobyl-related impacts.

In this regard, Belarus would welcome the launching of extensive and detailed international consultations involving all those concerned with a view to examining political and practical aspects of such a forum. They should include, inter alia, modalities for the placement of the forum within the United Nations intergovernmental machinery; definition of the international and legal status of the forum, including the issues of ownership, authority and universal acceptance of its prospective findings and recommendations; reporting arrangements of the forum to the General Assembly; and positioning of the forum towards the existing United Nations instruments for international cooperation on Chernobyl and other relevant issues.